Better quality of life for current and future generations

Government Sustainable Development Strategy

A SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 2007

Québec

Premier's message

Our top priority is to enhance Quebecers' well-being, health and quality of life. This social project will make it possible to protect and make sound use of our environment for the greater good of current and future generations. It is based on a vision of sustainable development that links environmental protection, social progress and economic efficiency.

The National Assembly's unanimous adoption of the *Sustainable Development Act* is eloquent proof of the project's importance and reflects the will of all concerned to play a role in achieving this goal. All government departments, agencies and enterprises are being asked to support Québec society in order to mobilize its component elements.

Reconciling the three dimensions of development is, in itself, an enormous challenge that offers highly stimulating opportunities to tackle the major problems facing Québec. Confronted with demographic challenges, growing health and education requirements, regional development and public debt reduction imperatives, the necessity of fighting poverty and social exclusion and the need to develop and use our natural resources rationally and responsibly and protect our environment and natural and cultural heritage, Québec has opted for innovation and a modern-day solution in the form of sustainable development.

The sustainable development strategy—the heart of our sustainable development plan—paves the way for a new era of joint efforts and intersectorial, multidisciplinary collaboration. Henceforth, all of the government's efforts must be centred on sustainable development. Government departments, agencies and enterprises will have to take the sustainable development principles contained in the *Sustainable Development Act* into account. The same is true for the objectives of the government strategy. Gradually, all sectors of our society will join us on the road to sustainable development.

The government strategy will be reflected in the action plans of its departments and public organizations through tangible measures allowing Québec to join the ranks of the most progressive, most responsible nations. By setting an example, the Québec public service will encourage the population to follow suit and pursue its efforts to help Québec society make headway equitably for the well-being of future generations.

Jean Charest

Minister's message

The *Sustainable Development Act* assented to on April 19, 2006 provides that the government adopt, in the year following that date, a strategy explaining the public service's sustainable development vision, challenges, aims and objectives. The Act confers the responsibility for orchestrating this strategy on the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks.

In a bid for effectiveness and consistency, the Government Sustainable Development Strategy draft describes the means chosen to give precedence to a concerted approach that respects all sustainable development principles. It defines the roles and responsibilities of the members of the public service and provides for mechanisms ensuring its implementation and monitoring.

This draft strategy was developed in conjunction with all government departments and many government agencies. We were especially careful to address the concerns expressed by Quebecers in the consultation tour held throughout Québec from February to May 2005.

I am, therefore, most pleased to submit, for public consultation, our sustainable development vision, objectives and implementation process. The *Sustainable Development Act* provided an action framework. The Government Sustainable Development Strategy will enable us to get to work by clearly indicating what we want to do and where we want to go.

Soon, other steps will allow Québec society to complete its adoption of the sustainable development process. Once the strategy is adopted, all government departments, agencies and enterprises will have to identify the objectives they intend to target to contribute to its implementation and the activities or measures they plan to institute. They will be invited to do so in the form of action plans. And, throughout the coming year, following another public consultation, Québec should be able to adopt an initial series of indicators allowing it to diligently pursue the progress it will have made.

This draft sustainable development strategy concerns each and every one of us. Its realization depends on the commitment of us all.

Line Beauchamp

Government Sustainable Development Strategy

Context

The passage of the *Sustainable Development Act* was an important milestone in the government's sustainable development process. Now, this process has to become even more concrete in the form of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy, which is the reference framework in which the government indicates its aims, objectives and methods for achieving this end. Ministerial policies, programs and actions must fall within this reference framework in order to make government action coherent within a perspective of sustainable development.

As soon as the strategy takes effect, more than fifty government departments, agencies and enterprises will prepare and implement action plans to achieve the goals defined in it. Among other things, these action plans will be based on pursuing the sectoral sustainable development measures already implemented (See figure 1). Reporting and monitoring measures will be set up to assess the extent to which these objectives have been attained.

Before going ahead and adopting a government sustainable development strategy, the government wishes to submit the strategy to a public consultation. The population and all stakeholders are therefore invited to give their point of view on the draft strategy. It is possible to view both the full and abridged versions of the strategy on Portail Québec (www.gouv.qc.ca) and on the Web site created specifically for the consultation (www.assnat.qc.ca/DeveloppementDurable). In the meantime, a parliamentary commission will receive comments and suggestions on the draft strategy.

The *Sustainable Development Act* assented to on April 19, 2006 gives the government one year to adopt a sustainable development strategy. The Government Sustainable Development Strategy governs primarily the public service, targeting government departments, agencies and enterprises and eventually applying to municipal bodies, educational establishments and health and social services institutions, thereby improving Quebecers' quality of life.

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy will help establish a new management framework within the public service so that sustainable development becomes the watchword for the exercise of its powers and responsibilities. The strategy will underlie all legislation, strategies, policies and programs proposed by the government, governing actions for the years to come.

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy also concerns all Quebecers since it must reflect the range of concerns expressed by citizens and communities and all settings and living conditions in Quebec.

These concerns were voiced at public hearings held on the Sustainable Development Strategy from February to May 2005. Among other things, the strategy must take into consideration the differences between rural and urban areas and the situation of Native communities. It seeks to influence and encourage individuals and businesses to adopt practices supporting sustainable development objectives. The measures and actions proposed by government departments and agencies will affect the lives of Quebecers and many organizations and require the participation of one and all. The public, associations and businesses are asked to contribute to Québec's sustainable development.

The government strategy centres on aims and objectives promoting the integration of social, economic and environmental considerations. It will also facilitate the commitment, participation and joint efforts of government departments and agencies with regard to information and education measures, tools or models for the design, determination and analysis of projects in terms of sustainable development, to take into account all the principles of sustainable development; for example, tools that will make it easier for them to take all the principles of sustainable development into account.

Figure 1

Québec's Sustainable Development Plan

Legislative **FRAMEWORK**	*Sustainable Development Act*
IMPLEMENTATION REFERENCE FRAMEWORK	**Government Sustainable Development Strategy**
	Vision: A society in which the citizens' quality of life is and remains a reality. A responsible, innovative society able to excel in all of its achievements. A society based on harmony between economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity.
	Issues: • Develop knowledge • Promote responsible action • Foster commitment
	9 strategic directions and 19 areas of intervention
	29 objectives
IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	**Action plans** of the public service's departments and agencies
MONITORING MEASURES	• Sustainable development indicators • Annual reports • Sustainable Development Commissioner

Results measurement

The strategy will be completed no later than one year following its approval with the adoption of a first list of sustainable development indicators to monitor and measure Québec's sustainable development progress. In this context, a special effort will be made to mesh these future indicators with other existing and future monitoring tools and measures. Therefore:

- **the information and monitoring measures contained in the government departments' and agencies' action plans will be used to develop tools for measuring the extent to which this strategy's objectives have been attained;**

- **all monitoring information and measures will have to be consistent with the sustainable development indicators used to monitor Québec's sustainable development progress.**

The action plans to be developed by government departments and public agencies following the strategy's adoption will include much more specific measures. They might, for example, concern the protection of wetlands, land use, rurality, integrated resource management, strengthening regions, risk management and safeguarding our cultural, natural and other forms of heritage.

The strategy's objectives will promote convergent action by a great many stakeholders targeting common goals, thereby permitting significant progress on the road to sustainable development.

The principles of sustainable development

(Extract from the *Sustainable Development Act*, chapter 3, 2006)

a) "HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE": People, human health and improved quality of life are at the centre of sustainable development concerns. People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;

b) "SOCIAL EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY": Development must be undertaken in a spirit of intra- and inter-generational equity and social ethics and solidarity;

c) "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION": To achieve sustainable development, environmental protection must constitute an integral part of the development process;

d) "ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY": The economy of Québec and its regions must be effective, geared toward innovation and economic prosperity that is conducive to social progress and respectful of the environment;

e) "PARTICIPATION AND COMMITMENT": The participation and commitment of citizens and citizens' groups are needed to define a concerted vision of development and to ensure its environmental, social and economic sustainability;

f) "ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE": Measures favourable to education, access to information and research must be encouraged in order to stimulate innovation, raise awareness and ensure effective participation of the public in the implementation of sustainable development;

g) "SUBSIDIARITY": Powers and responsibilities must be delegated to the appropriate level of authority. Decision-making centres should be adequately distributed and as close as possible to the citizens and communities concerned;

h) "INTER-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION": Governments must collaborate to ensure that development is sustainable from an environmental, social and economic standpoint. The external impact of actions in a given territory must be taken into consideration;

i) "PREVENTION": In the presence of a known risk, preventive, mitigating and corrective actions must be taken, with priority given to actions at the source;

j) "PRECAUTION": When there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty must not be used as a reason for postponing the adoption of effective measures to prevent environmental degradation;

k) "PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE": The cultural heritage, made up of property, sites, landscapes, traditions and knowledge, reflects the identity of a society. It passes on the values of a society from generation to generation, and the preservation of this heritage fosters the sustainability of development. Cultural heritage components must be identified, protected and enhanced, taking their intrinsic rarity and fragility into account;

l) "BIODIVERSITY PRESERVATION": Biological diversity offers incalculable advantages and must be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations. The protection of species, ecosystems and the natural processes that maintain life is essential if quality of human life is to be maintained;

m) "RESPECT FOR ECOSYSTEM SUPPORT CAPACITY": Human activities must be respectful of the support capacity of ecosystems and ensure the perenniality of ecosystems;

n) "RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION": Production and consumption patterns must be changed in order to make production and consumption more viable and more socially and environmentally responsible, in particular through an ecoefficient approach that avoids waste and optimizes the use of resources;

o) "POLLUTER PAYS": Those who generate pollution or whose actions otherwise degrade the environment must bear their share of the cost of measures to prevent, reduce, control and mitigate environmental damage;

p) "INTERNALIZATION OF COSTS": The cost of goods and services must reflect all the costs they generate for society during their whole life cycle, from their design to their final consumption or disposal.

Sustainable development vision

Section 2 of the Act defines "sustainable development" as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities".

This definition translates into the following vision of sustainable development proposed by the government: "**A society in which the citizen's quality of life is and remains a reality. A responsible, innovative society able to excel in all of its achievements. A society based on harmony between economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity.**"

For the Québec government, sustainable development is a dynamic, fundamental force that guides its actions.

The strategy in a nutshell

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy's directions, action guidelines and priority objectives correspond to the State's essential missions, reflect the government's action priorities, respect international sustainable development objectives, apply sustainable development principles and permit the implementation of tangible measures whose results can be measured.

A summary of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy is presented in Appendix 1.

Three fundamental challenges and nine strategic directions

The Government Sustainable Development Strategy seeks to enhance the quality of life of current and future generations. It is based on three fundamental challenges resulting from this overall intention and simultaneously addresses the three inextricable dimensions linked to quality of life: living environment (environmental dimension), lifestyle (social dimension) and standard of living (economic dimension).

ACTION-ORIENTED

These challenges linked to knowledge, responsible action and social commitment translate into nine directions outlining the route the government intends to take. These directions and the twenty-nine related objectives will guide government departments and agencies in preparing their sustainable development action plans. Monitoring measures will then make it possible to assess whether the results envisaged were achieved.

Challenge 1: **Develop knowledge**

Knowledge is the preferred tool for encouraging endorsement of sustainable development values and principles and making enlightened decisions. Knowledge enables better action.

The development, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and scientific, technical, traditional and popular experiments and experience require awareness, training, research and innovation. Thanks to this knowledge, it is possible to act efficiently and responsibly to rouse the public's interest and stimulate commitment. In the sustainable development context, knowledge must be used to reduce and better manage the risk factors that could harm people's health and safety. It can help to develop the land and its resources responsibly and promote individual and collective growth.

Challenge 2: **Promote responsible action**

Adopting practices that are both socially and ecologically responsible and economically viable contributes to development and prosperity. To be more viable, every society must try to reduce its ecological footprint so as to leave future generations equitable development opportunities that are at least equal to those we currently enjoy. It must continually question its production and consumption modes to make them more efficient and more responsible. In this context, the public service is called to play a front-line role, show leadership and promote responsible action by the population.

In foresight, Québec must also adjust to demographic changes by adopting innovative measures designed to foster economic prosperity and demographic balance, notably through catalyst projects creating wealth. It must develop its land and natural resources responsibly, using an integrated management approach based on resource sustainability and communities' viability and resilience while promoting the expression of regional cultural diversity. The public service must show leadership by integrating sustainable development objectives and principles into all of its decisions and actions.

Challenge 3: **Foster commitment**

Implementing sustainable development in Québec requires commitment on the part of all sectors of society and the entire public service. This commitment must be manifest individually and collectively in the will to safeguard the various components of the collective heritage and equitable sharing of collective wealth. The fight against poverty and social exclusion, and the improvement of quality of life require the government to exercise leadership in the area of community commitment and sharing. In this regard, we must work together to meet challenges that extend beyond Québec's borders.

By fostering personal involvement in society, the State and the population combine their efforts in an approach that ensures the expression of various viewpoints and the development of a society that respects the environment and that is committed and prosperous at the same time.

Strategic directions

The government wishes to address these sustainable development challenges while taking into account the inextricable nature of their environmental, social and economic dimensions. The three challenges: develop knowledge, promote responsible action and foster commitment will be addressed in each of the following directions:

Direction 1
Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate

Direction 2
Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment

Direction 3
Produce and consume responsibly

Direction 4
Increase economic efficiency

Direction 5
Address demographic changes

Direction 6
Practice integrated, sustainable land use and development

Direction 7
Preserve and share the collective heritage

Direction 8
Promote social involvement

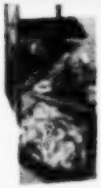
Direction 9
Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality

In the following chapters, each strategic direction is examined in keeping with the action guidelines chosen, among other things, to follow up on the decisions of the *Forum des générations*[1]. Each direction is then expressed in the form of objectives. The Government Sustainable Development Strategy targets twenty-nine objectives.

1 The *Forum des générations* was one of the *Place aux citoyens* forums held throughout Quebec. Forum participants agreed to apply their actions to nine specific fields: stepping up our efforts in prevention, guaranteeing the future of our health system, guaranteeing educational services for future generations throughout the territory, helping families, developing the economy of Quebec and its regions, training and adapting the workforce, acting on immigration, focusing on sustainable development for Québec and implementing the youth action strategy.

Direction 1

Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate



In the context of sustainable development, it is essential that each and every one of us adopt values, principles and objectives promoting responsible behaviour. We must learn and apply practices helping to improve quality of life. This direction is based on the principles of *participation and commitment* and *access to knowledge*.

This is why, be it in the field of natural sciences, the humanities or social sciences, culture, technologies or the economy, Québec must constantly innovate. People devising ideas, practices – related to social innovation, etc. – and novel technologies must be encouraged to contribute and their work must be recognized. Given the rising demand for goods and services complying with social and environmental accountability criteria, it is essential to remain at the cutting edge of new markets, both domestic and foreign, in order to ensure that Québec's economy is competitive and efficient in the long term.

INFORMATION

We must work even harder to make people aware of the concept of sustainable development, its imperatives and the environmental, social and economic challenges associated with it so that each member of society can help achieve it. The identification and publication of sustainable development indicators is one of the means contained in Québec's *Sustainable Development Act* for informing the public of the current situation and progress made.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Sustainable development challenges generally require analyzing situations and problems from a new perspective and using innovative technologies and methods. We must ensure that educational programs favour the acquisition of new skills and that they are available and accessible to those concerned.

Sustainable development information and training measures will be offered to certain categories of public service personnel. Among other things, these measures will address the contents, implementation and monitoring of the *Sustainable Development Act* and Government Sustainable Development Strategy, and the methodological tools designed to better integrate sustainable development into decision-making processes.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Sustainable development requires support for research into new technologies and practices or to create new products and services that are efficient as well as socially and environmentally accountable. It is necessary to support and disseminate new, pro-sustainable development initiatives.

Proposed objectives

1. **Make people increasingly aware of the sustainable development concept and principles. Promote knowledge and experience sharing in this area and assimilate the knowledge and know-how facilitating its implementation.**

2. **Create and periodically update Québec's sustainable development profile.**

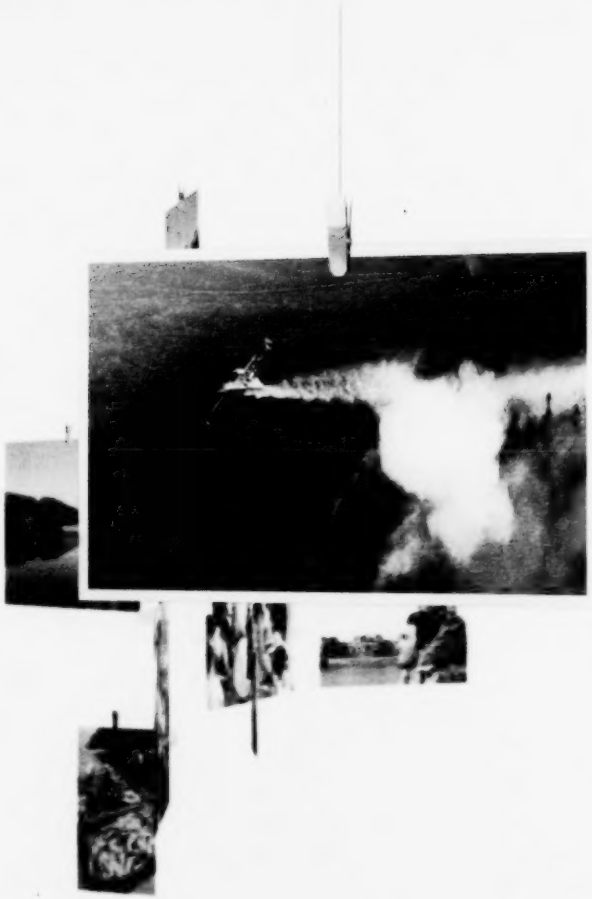
3. **Support research and new practices and technologies contributing to sustainable development and maximizing the spinoffs in Québec.**

Direction 2

Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment

Improving health and safety is a fundamental concern for any society. From a sustainable development viewpoint, it requires a global approach to risk management and integrated promotion and awareness efforts in all echelons of society.

Managing health and safety hazards is based on the principles of *prevention, precaution, environmental protection, access to knowledge,* and *health and quality of life* with emphasis on their associated causes. In the presence of a known risk, actions designed to prevent or mitigate the potential effects of the phenomenon or event feared must be taken, first at the source, using the best available and economically-applicable techniques. In so doing, we can reduce negative medium- and long-term impacts on health, safety and the environment and considerably cut intervention costs.



PREVENTIVE APPROACH

Health may be affected by an unsafe environment, facilities and practices. We must build a culture of prevention and ongoing improvement to reduce the risk of accidents and illnesses and enhance quality of life. Efforts in this sense will benefit the health, safety and environment of current and future generations.

CONCERTED RISK MANAGEMENT

A society wishing to ensure its economic prosperity and growth and seeking to protect its living environment acts upstream of disasters and other events or phenomena that could have harmful effects, such as those generated by climate change, pandemics or toxic product spills, to avoid them or reduce their potential impacts. Concerted management of the risks potentially facing a nation and a territory must be included in a sustainable development initiative.

Proposed objectives

4. **Continue developing and promoting a culture of prevention and define conditions that are beneficial for health, safety and the environment.**

5. **Better prepare communities to face events that could harm their health and safety and to mitigate the consequences.**

Direction 3

Produce and consume responsibly

Government departments and agencies are preferred players in stimulating active participation in choices that will enable us to leave future generations a sound environmental, economic and social heritage. Better social and environmental practices can make public and private organizations more profitable. The government intends to show leadership and encourage business accountability. This objective addresses the principles of *environmental protection, respect for ecosystem support capacity, responsible production and consumption,* and *polluter pays.*

ECORESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Government departments and agencies will make efforts and involve their partners in identifying and implementing actions to promote more responsible consumption and production measures. A major consumer of goods and services, the public service plays a driving role in the Québec economy. In a bid for efficiency, it will take the lead by adopting ecologically and socially responsible practices, for example by integrating environmental and social responsibility criteria into purchasing and contract attribution procedures.

In a context where there is an abundance and wide range of consumer products, guidelines are needed to help make informed and responsible consumer choices. Among other things, certification for goods and services will be encouraged.

ETHICS, ECOCONDITIONALITY AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

One way to encourage best practices is to subject public investment to environmental protection and social accountability criteria. Implementing ecoconditionality and social accountability in public assistance programs and financial institutions' programs are an option. The government will ensure that tools and scorecards are developed to allow the public service to better take sustainable development principles into consideration. In a sustainable development context, where social and environmental accountability are important, a code of ethics, is a plus for organizations. More and more government departments, agencies, institutions and enterprises are adopting a code of ethics, a code of best practices, or a policy based on sustainable development and responsible investment. Such an approach offers the twofold advantage of promoting ongoing improvement of these practices and of the corporate image.

Proposed objectives

6. **Apply environmental management measures and an ecoresponsible procurement policy within government departments and agencies.**

7. **Promote reduction in the amount of energy, natural resources and materials used to produce and market goods and services.**

8. **Increase the share of renewable energies with less environmental impact (biofuels, biogas, biomass, solar energy, wind energy, geothermics, hydroelectricity, etc.) in Québec's energy consumption.**

9. **Apply more ecoconditionality and social accountability in public assistance programs and encourage their implementation in financial institutions programs.**

10. **Provide the reference points required to make enlightened, responsible consumer choices and, if applicable, promote goods and services certification.**

Direction 4

Increase economic efficiency

Long considered antagonistic concepts, economic development and environmental protection can go hand in hand in a context of sustainable development. By defining real costs (which include environmental and social impacts in production values), the government and society can make enlightened choices. These choices favour optimal natural resource use and attenuate its environmental impact. The principles of sustainable development addressed here are *economic efficiency, internalization of costs* and *polluter pays*.

Intelligent legislation can reinforce conditions for a competitive, innovative economy that attracts investors and qualified workers and helps maintain a high standard of living. It prioritizes social, environmental and economic factors while achieving a high level of public protection. The economic efficiency of business is, among other things, the result of measures taken to provide an economic environment that is conducive to business development. Government defines several of the rules that frame or support the development of business, including legislative and regulatory frameworks, taxation, business agreements, equipment and public infrastructures. It can also in various ways influence the social climate and quality of life, which are essential ingredients of economic prosperity. In the same vein, external factors, the adoption of measures having an economic impact, and ecofiscality are other means that can be taken to support and increase economic efficiency.

EXTERNALITIES

'Externality' or 'external cost' means the economic cost that is normally not taken into account by the markets or in the decisions of market agents. In a sustainable development context, we must recognize the social, economic and environmental impacts of goods and services throughout their service life, from their design to their consumption or end use. This approach allows decision-makers and consumers to know the actual cost of the goods and services they use and, consequently, to make more enlightened choices.

MEASURES WITH ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND ECOFISCALITY

Various economic measures are advocated to ensure that resources are used more rationally and more responsibly. For instance, ecofiscality, which is increasingly used in OECD countries, can correct distortions arising on markets due to poor resource allocation and causing serious damage to the environment. To correct this situation, governments employ various fiscal measures, including taxes, duties, royalties, credits and exemptions.

The Québec government seeks to avoid the deleterious effects of certain taxes and to identify new economic measures to achieve sustainable development objectives.

Proposed objectives

11. Increasingly reveal the externalities associated with goods and services production and consumption.

12. Promote recourse to economic, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives so that goods and services production and consumption reflect sustainable development imperatives.

Direction 5

Address demographic changes

Low birthrate and immigration and the relative inability to keep new immigrants in the province are factors likely to prevent the long-term renewal of our population. Québec more than any other society with which it can compare will face an acceleration in the aging of its population, a phenomenon attributable to denatality and longer life expectancy. Also to be taken into consideration is the strong demographic growth of the Native communities population in Québec. In the name of the principles of *economic efficiency, health and quality of life* and *social equity and solidarity*, we must take the steps necessary to maintain and improve the standard of living of the population while maintaining Québec's financial capability to provide the services the population is used to receiving and meet new needs.

It is particularly important to fight against school dropouts, to see to it that as many young people as possible earn a diploma and that those old enough to work are given adequate training. Moreover, it is essential to decrease the public debt, which will weigh heavier on subsequent generations who are fewer in number. A new balance must be sought by acting on population size and distribution and family support, particularly individuals who must care for loved ones with reduced autonomy. Actions must also be taken on the job rate, compensation, work time organization and productivity levels.

DEMOGRAPHIC BALANCE

Québec's demographic profile must be improved through a higher birth rate, a greater number of immigrants and a positive interprovincial migratory balance. Intervention must target families which, regardless of their make-up, are an important component of sustainable development. Improving the standard of living of adults, introducing measures enabling them to conciliate their responsibilities, and developing socio-economic conditions that are favourable for families are some of the conditions that could foster the desire to have children. Other measures could create an environment suitable for youth, help them enter the job market and encourage them to have an active personal life.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In several regions, the number of work-aged people has significantly decreased in recent years. Such a decrease could cause a drop in the standard of living and a decrease in public funds at a time when the government will be facing an increase in public expenditures. Also, it is imperative that the potential impacts of an aging population be offset by measures to develop jobs, increase productivity and increase the gross domestic product per capita.

Proposed objectives

13. **Improve the demographic profile of Québec and its regions.**

14. **Focus on family life and facilitate conciliation of work, school and personal life.**

15. **Increase standard of living.**

16. **Increase productivity and quality of jobs using measures that are ecologically and socially responsible.**

17. **Provide future generations with public health funding.**

Direction 6

Practice integrated, sustainable land use and development

The government must encourage a balanced approach to land use and development in Québec, while considering community aspirations, regional particularities, cultural features, protection of natural habitats and investment opportunities. Integrated land development is also based on the abundance and diversity of natural resources in Québec's regions. Promoting these resources hinges upon the realization of wealth generating and mobilizing projects for the regions' populations. This development must be stimulated while preserving the integrity of the landscape and agricultural potential, maintaining biodiversity, limiting the negative effects of resource use and urban sprawl and protecting the watersheds. *Subsidiarity, protection of cultural heritage, biodiversity preservation, environmental protection, health and quality of life* and *respect for ecosystem support capacity* are some of the principles addressed here.

It is necessary to pursue and step up the application of conditions facilitating the sharing of responsibilities and active participation of regional and local interests as well as those of the Native communities in their own development. It is also necessary to distribute investments fairly and efficiently in consideration of each region's aspirations and potential and the will of all stakeholders.

INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT

Integrated land management is a comprehensive approach that consists in the management of natural, cultural, human and financial resources, the risks that are present and development projects. This approach, which takes social, environmental and economic issues into account, must be adopted by all decision-making levels in order for development initiatives to be efficient and coherent. All must understand the issues linked to economic and social development and the resources to be protected. For example, adoption of local or regional sustainable development strategies, together with the Government Sustainable Development Strategy, helps to implement integrated management in regional and local administrations and Native communities.

IMPROVING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Improving the quality of human settlements, municipalities, cities and villages, requires an integrated approach that considers the numerous interactions inherent to all living environments. The quality of life of human settlements today is an appealing factor that fosters their development and competitiveness. It is also necessary to consolidate existing urban zones and as far as possible confine peripheral urban sprawl of these zones to areas that already have infrastructures and services. Such an approach serves to preserve natural ecosystems, landscapes and land suitable for farming and recreation. The population must have access to quality public services in keeping with the government's financial capacity and regional contingencies.

Proposed objectives

18. **Integrate the imperatives of sustainable development in regional and local strategies and design and development plans.**

19. **Strengthen the viability and resilience of urban, rural or territorial communities and native communities.**

20. **Ensure fair and efficient access to basic services according to regional and local realities.**

Direction 7

Preserve and share the collective heritage

To ensure the welfare of future generations it can be agreed that today's decisions, particularly those involving culture, heritage assets, land use and resource use (natural, human and financial) must be socially, economically and ecologically responsible. Assets must be preserved and practices that make up the identity of a society kept alive so that everyone may benefit. A society's culture is fashioned over a long period according to the diversity of its environment and the interaction between natural and human forces. Principles addressed here are *intergovernmental partnership and cooperation, precaution, protection of cultural heritage, biodiversity preservation, prevention* and *respect for ecosystem support capacity.*

MANAGEMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE HERITAGE

Ecological, cultural, scientific and economic heritage is a source of well-being and prosperity. In a perspective of sustainable development, it is a legacy to pass on to future generations. It is also preferable to use non-renewable resources with caution and to use renewable resources without compromising their regeneration. In fact, development activities of all types and use of agricultural, forest, aquatic and mining resources must respect the support capacity of ecosystems. It is also essential to ensure the development, survival and transfer of local and traditional knowledge and practices.

COOPERATION

Pollution knows no boundaries and the globalization of trade is compelling us to take action and work together to advance ideas and practices, and to resolve problems through innovation and prevention. Now and in future, Québec must continue talks with its neighbours and partners and participate in international debates. It has a responsibility to take part in the development of underpriviledged nations. In this respect, programs for cooperation and international solidarity constitute an ideal vènue, particularly with other governments, international government agencies and NGOs.

Proposed objectives

21. Strengthen conservation and development of the cultural and scientific heritage.

22. Ensure the protection and development of the natural heritage and resources in keeping with the support capacity of ecosystems.

23. Step up cooperation among national and international partners on integrated sustainable development projects.

Direction 8

Promote social involvement

Getting more citizens to participate in collective life and in solving the problems that affect them enables Québec to progress. Individuals and communities who take part in collective life contribute more to improving the population's quality of life. Getting people involved in their common interests within their communities is based on community organization and action. Participation in collective life is greatly aided by access to employment and through the acquisition and renewal of knowledge and skills. This addresses the principles of *participation and commitment, inter-governmental partnership and cooperation* and *social equity and solidarity.*

COMMUNITY ACTION

Social, environmental and economic community action is a factor in cohesion and security. Based above all on values of mutual aid, solidarity and development of collective capacities rather than on commercial ties, community action improves the lives of people and their families in a sustainable way by helping them make the most of their potential. Community action is a collective action based on solidarity, democracy, equity and autonomy. Ultimately, it aims for social development and is inherent in organizations working to improve the social fabric and living conditions and to develop the potential of individuals and communities. Community-based organizations create venues for involvement and participation in the life of a community. The perspective of these organizations corresponds in many ways to that which inspires the supporters of sustainable development.

DEMOCRATIC LIFE

Participation of the citizenry in the democratic process is also a fundamental commitment for communities. Participatory democracy and democractic governance enable the opinions, knowledge and expertise of citizens to be taken into account regarding their own living environments. Through the democratic process, this expertise enriches decision-making on projects or directions that concern them, particularly when it is acquired early on in the consultation process. The principle of involvement and commitment stipulates that citizens and the groups representing them are necessary in defining a common vision of development and ensuring its environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Proposed objectives

24. Increase citizens' involvement in their community.

25. Increase consideration for the concerns of citizens in decisions.

Direction 9

Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality

Preventing and reducing social and economic inequality is at the very heart of sustainable development, as are economic efficiency and public participation. These inequalities call on all of society's players in the face of the importance of narrowing the gaps between individuals (notably between women and men), families (dual and single parent families) and communities (notably Québec society and Native communities). Action must also be taken to give children and their families better equality of opportunity. Moreover, since for many communities the only avenue to escaping poverty is to take charge of their development, supporting local entrepreneurship must be a priority. We must fight poverty and share the fruits of success with those who can benefit. The principles of *social equity and solidarity*, *inter-governmental partnership and cooperation* and *economic efficiency* are addressed here.

EQUITY

Economic development is also intricately linked with social and cultural development. The State's intervention in this context enables a fairer distribution of wealth. The involvement of all players in society's development is largely the result of the level of social justice, cultural diversity and economic equity – interrelated values that are responsible for social cohesion. The greater the divide between individuals, families, rich and poor communities, the more social cohesion is jeopardized. Moreover, the socioeconomic level is a major factor in health and well-being.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Employment is a key vector of social integration. It generally gives people autonomy and allows a society to progress. The capacity of people to remain employed or find new employment today increasingly requires a high school diploma at least, recognition of adult skills or the opportunity to take ongoing training. It is also important to help immigrants and members of cultural communities to enter the job market. Prejudice and discrimination must also be recognized and fought. Having access to knowledge and learning throughout one's lifetime is one of the recognized conditions of cultural, social and economic development. It allows for the sustainable fight against poverty and social exclusion while increasing a society's skills, skills that are indispensable to economic growth and protection of the environment. Social economy plays a major role because it enables services to be rendered near the communities and promotes the social and economic integration of people who are marginalized or who live outside the job market.

Proposed objectives

26. Prevent and fight poverty and social exclusion.

27. Increase schooling, number of graduates and the population's qualification.

28. Increase participation in ongoing training activities and manpower qualification.

29. Support initiatives of the social economy sector aimed at the sustainable integration of people outside the job market.

Mechanisms and means for implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the sustainable development strategy will be based on mechanisms and means that foster synergy of action and collegial (between all partners) and transversal (in all sectors) work. By this, the government wishes its sustainable development strategy to considerably improve the quality of life of the entire population with a view to equity for future generations. The mechanism and means for implementation, monitoring and evaluation will guarantee that the strategy will be quickly transformed into concrete actions.

MECHANISMS PROVIDED FOR BY THE ACT

- The **Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks** was given the responsibility to promote sustainable development and coordinate implementation of the *Sustainable Development Act* and its follow-up, including the Government Sustainable Development Strategy. To support the department in this task, an assistant deputy minister was appointed and a special unit, the Bureau de coordination du développement durable, set up.

Conditions for Success

The conditions for success for the strategy's implementation mechanisms are as follows:

1. **Research, agreement and action through partnerships serving to create structuring snowball effects by reaching a maximum of clienteles;**

2. **Focus efforts on coordination, accompaniment and monitoring of the public service;**

3. **Empower departments and agencies to deliver coherent messages and encourage their personnel, partners and clienteles to adopt habits likely to foster adherence to a sustainable development approach;**

4. **Draw inspiration from external markets, while not straying from the realities of the milieu, to develop tools that are practical, coherent and adapted to the particularities of Québec.**

- The **government departments and agencies** must define the objectives they intend to pursue or the interventions they intend to carry out to contribute to the strategy's implementation. They will be asked to do so using action plans. They are also held to report on their results in their annual management report or activity reports.
- **Sustainable development indicators** as well as monitoring measures will be defined and documented to provide ongoing feedback on progress. They will be submitted to public consultation prior to their adoption.
- A **Sustainable Development Commissioner** reporting to the Auditor General will evaluate the government's performance on the sustainable development strategy's implementation.

OTHER MEASURES FACILITATING THE STRATEGY'S IMPLEMENTATION

- The **Comité interministériel du développement durable,** made up of high-level representatives from twenty-two departments of the Québec government will coordinate monitoring of the strategy's implementation and produce the periodical progress reports and implementation reports required by law. Other complementary mechanisms will be quickly put in place to enable all government departments, agencies and enterprises to participate and be fully involved in the strategy's application, in reaching its objectives and in carrying out the other measures and objectives described in the Act with regard to measurement indicators, accountability mechanisms and sustainable development promotion.
- The eventual subjection of **municipalities and educational, health and social services establishments** to the strategy's implementation will be based on an approach adapted to their situation, practices and experiences. In the meantime, they will be encouraged to carry out and promote sustainable development oriented endeavours.
- The Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, in cooperation with the departments and agencies, will propose **information, awareness raising, training and coaching activities** related to the sustainable development approach for targeted classes of the public service personnel. Moreover, it will support government efforts to promote, develop and use models and other methodological tools designed to help integrate sustainable development into its decisions.
- The Québec government's **Web site** (Portail Québec) will facilitate consultation on sustainable development, provide information on topics related to the approach and enable visitors to make comments and suggestions. Any person who wishes clarification on the government's performance with respect to the sustainable development strategy may submit their questions to the departments and agencies concerned.
- Upon publication of the reports on the Government Sustainable Development Strategy's implementation, the government plans to offer the population **concrete opportunities** to share their opinions on the progress that has been made and difficulties encountered in the implementation of the sustainable development approach.

Implementation plan for the Government Sustainable Development Plan

Immediately upon the strategy's formal adoption, to ensure the quick and ordered implementation of the Government Sustainable Development Strategy throughout the public service, the government will have:

- **Supplied an action plan guide describing the suggested practices, imperatives created by the strategy and minimal monitoring and reporting conditions, and provided training to the staff concerned on its implementation;**
- **Strengthened the role and operations of the Comité interministériel du développement durable and implemented networking mechanisms for all agencies addressed by the *Sustainable Development Act*;**
- **Adopted a mechanism to monitor the departments' and agencies' strategy implementation operations;**
- **Planned the implementation, immediately following the strategy's adoption, of broad intersectoral projects for some of the directions, to create the synergy needed for the strategy's implementation;**
- **Agreed on a vision for sustainable development information, awareness raising and training measures, with regard to aspects and activities held in common by the public service personnel or classes of personnel;**
- **Implemented a sustainable development monitoring mechanism focusing on capacity building of agencies by giving them access to strategic, structured information;**
- **Developed an enriched and reviewed version of the principles of sustainable development described in the Act to make it easier for departments and agencies to incorporate into their action;**
- **Formalized an agreement with the Institut de la statistique du Québec on mechanisms of collaboration pertaining to sustainable development indicators and other monitoring measures.**

Appendix 1

Government Sustainable Development Strategy – Summary Table

VISION

Section 2 of the Act defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities". This definition translates into the following vision of sustainable development proposed by the government: **"A society in which the citizen's quality of life is and remains a reality. A responsible, innovative society able to excel in all its achievements. A society based on harmony between economic vitality, environmental quality and social equity."** For the Québec government, sustainable development is a dynamic and fundamental guiding force.

Issue 1: **Develop knowledge**

Issue 2: **Promote responsible action**

Issue 3: **Foster commitment**

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Under the Sustainable Development Act, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
1. **Inform, raise awareness, educate, innovate** (information/education and training./ research and innovation)	• Participation and commitment • Access to knowledge	1. Make people increasingly aware of sustainable development concept and principles. Promote knowledge and experience sharing in this area and assimilate knowledge and know-how facilitating its implementation.	On its Web site, the Office de protection du consommateur presents information concerning responsible consumption. *Le Coin de Rafale*, the youth section of the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs, proposes adventures and information capsules for young people.
		2. Create and periodically update Québec's sustainable development profile.	The Institut de la statistique du Québec regularly publishes economic and social indicators for Québec.
		3. Support research and new practices and technologies contributing to sustainable development and maximizing spinoffs in Québec.	*Expertise recherche Québec* came about under the Québec Science and Innovation Policy to enrich research and innovation monitoring.
2. **Reduce and manage risks to improve health, safety and the environment** (preventive approach, concerted risk management)	• Prevention • Precaution • E[illegible]nental protection • Access to knowledge • Health and quality of life	4. Continue developing and promoting a culture of prevention and define conditions to improve health, safety and the environment.	The Commission de la santé et de la sécurité au travail adopted a three-part action plan on education, training and work integration specifically for young workers. The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux launched the *Program for the promotion of healthy lifestyles*.
		5. Better prepare communities to face events that could harm their health and safety and mitigate consequences.	The Ministère de la Sécurité publique coordinates the adoption of risk coverage schematics and civil security plans by the communities.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
3. **Produce and consume responsibly** (ecoresponsible production and consumption activities/ ethics, ecoconditionality and social accountability)	• Environmental protection • Respect for ecosystem support capacity • Responsible production and consumption • Polluter pays	6. Apply environmental management measures and an ecoresponsible procurement policy to departments and government agencies.	The Centre de services partagés du Québec has adopted an ecoresponsible procurement policy. State enterprises such as Hydro-Québec, Loto-Québec and the Société des alcools du Québec stand out for their socially and environmentally responsible conduct.
		7. Encourage reduction in the quantity of energy, natural resources and materials used to produce and market goods and services.	The Société immobilière du Québec has received environmental certification for several public buildings.
		8. Increase the share of renewable energies having less impact on the environment (biofuels, biogas, biomass, solar energy, wind power, geothermics, hydroelectricity, etc.) in Québec's energy consumption.	The *Stratégie énergétique du Québec* includes several measures to increase the share of renewable energies. Québec's climate change action plan allows for fighting greenhouse gas emissions while learning to adapt to climate change.
		9. Apply more ecoconditionality and social accountability in public assistance programs and encourage their implementation in financial institutions' programs.	Through its *Programme de remboursement des taxes foncières aux exploitations agricoles*, the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation has developed an approach to applying ecoconditionality in the farming sector.
		10. Provide the reference points required to make enlightened, responsible consumer choices and promote goods and services certification.	The Ministère du Tourisme, supported by the Bureau de normalisation du Québec, employs the "Quality Approach" to certify tourist products.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
4. **Increase economic efficiency** (externalities/ measures with economic impacts and ecofiscality)	• Economic efficiency • Internalization of costs • Polluter pays	11. Increasingly reveal the externalities associated with goods and services production and consumption.	Under the *Environment Quality Act*, enterprises that market or distribute packaging or printed material must compensate the municipalities for recovery and reuse services designated by the government.
		12. Promote recourse to economic fiscal and non-fiscal incentives so that goods and services production and consumption reflect sustainable development imperatives.	Recyc-Québec administers a royalty collected on each new tire sold, to finance the reuse of discarded tires.
5. **Address demographic changes** (demographic balance/employment and economic development)	• Economic efficiency • Health and quality of life • Social equity and solidarity	13. Improve Québec's demographic profile and that of its regions.	The *Québec Parental Insurance Plan* gives better financial support to parents who leave the job market to have or adopt a child.
		14. Promote family life and facilitate the balance between work, school and personal life.	The Youth Policy of the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation proposes an approach that promotes quality of life, training, coaching and access to the profession. The *Reduced Contribution Plan* increases the ability of families to acquire childcare services for children under age five.
		15. Increase standard of living.	The government's economic development strategy – *The Québec Advantage* – is specifically aimed at increasing the standard of living of Quebecers.
		16. Increase productivity and the quality of jobs through ecologically and socially responsible measures.	The Government Employment Plan aims to increase manpower qualification in particular.
		17. Transfer public health funds to future generations.	Québec set up the *Generations Fund* to reduce the debt load.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
6. **Sustainable and integrated land use and development** (integrated land management/ improvement of human settlements)	• Subsidiarity • Protection of cultural heritage • Preservation of biodiversity • Health and quality of life • Respect for ecosystem support capacity • Environmental protection	18. Integrate sustainable development imperatives into land use strategies and plans and regional and local development.	The Commission de protection du territoire agricole promotes land conservation for agricultural purposes. The Québec Water Policy promotes integrated water management. The government assigns land using an approach that integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development in land and natural resources use.
		19. Strengthen the viability and resilience of urban, rural and territorial communities and Native communities.	The government has tasked the Conférences régionales des élus with establishing a development plan within a perspective of sustainable development.
		20. Provide access to basic services according to regional and local realities, with a view to equity and efficiency.	Portail Québec offers citizens and enterprises services that provide access to government services.
7. **Preserve and share the collective heritage** (management of the collective heritage/ cooperation/equity)	• Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation • Precaution • Prevention • Respect for ecosystem support capacity • Protection of cultural heritage • Biodiversity preservation	21. Strengthen the conservation and implementation of the cultural and scientific heritage.	The *Estrun project* in Gaspésie uses an innovative landscape management approach that is based on concertation. The Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine keeps a register of Québec's natural culture.
		22. Protect and promote the natural heritage and resources within the support capacity of ecosystems.	The government adopted *Québec Biodiversity Strategy*.
		23. Step up cooperation with national and international partners on integrated sustainable development projects.	*Québec's International Policy* identifies the international solidarity effort as one of the government's key international affairs objectives. The Québec government and ten other governments signed an international agreement for the sustainable development of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River waters.

Under the Sustainable Development Act, all 16 principles of sustainable development are to be taken into account. This table presents only those principles directly linked to the strategic direction.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS (and areas of intervention)	KEY PRINCIPLES	OBJECTIVES	EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS UNDERWAY
8. **Promote social involvement** (social integration/ community action and democratic life)	• Participation and commitment • Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation • Social equity and solidarity	24. Increase citizens' involvement in their community.	The government adopted a community action plan.
		25. Increase citizens' involvement in decision-making.	Since 1978, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement has acted as a catalyst for the participation of citizens in government decision-making.
9. **Prevent and reduce social and economic inequality** (equity/ social integration)	• Social equity and solidarity • Inter-governmental partnership and cooperation • Economic efficiency	26. Prevent poverty and social exclusion.	The Québec government adopted the *Government Action Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*.
		27. Increase schooling, number of graduates and the population's qualification.	The *Government Employment Plan* aims among other things to increase the job market qualifications of citizens.
		28. Increase participation in ongoing training activities and manpower qualification.	The government policy on ongoing adult education and training provides basic training, increases the skills level and removes obstacles to accessibility.
		29. Support initiatives of the social economy sector aimed at the sustainable integration of people outside the job market.	The government supports the development of social economy enterprises, particularly in the personal services sector, community housing, social tourism and the environment.

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